











A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS,

Founded on the Eleventh Chapter of Judges.

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Ko the Wydens

OF THE

Mary Tharp College,

With whom I have spent many of the pleasantest hours of my life,

THIS LITTLE WORK

Is most affectionately inscribed.

May they be stimulated to all deeds worthy of Woman; then will each be worthy of self and her

ALMA MATER.





PREFACE.

ROM my earliest girlhood, the history of Jephthah's Daughter, told as it is in so few words, and yet those few beautifully revealing to us a character perfect in its simplicity, and uniting, without the slightest ostentation, every element of feminine excellence, has had a peculiar charm for me.

The coolest courage, the most un-

daunted heroism, the loftiest patriotism, consummated in the extremest act of self-sacrifice humanity can perform, were all present in her ready concurrence in her father's dreadful vow; and yet the simple Israelitish maiden seems to have thought only of filial obedience and right.

And the stern majesty of Jephthah, outcast and insulted; feeling keenly the wrongs he suffered, yet, by his determination and energy, aided by the blessing of the God he served, patiently working out a reputation which finally triumphed, and brought him the honor for which he toiled so long and faithfully, has been a favorite subject for study.

The master-passion of his nature I have made pride; fostered by the unfortunate circumstances of his life, and which, from his feeling his own worthiness, made him esteem himself just in proportion to the disesteem, or contempt of others; and which, so long as it led only to a just appreciation of himself, was right; but in excess became a wrong, as spoken by Telah, in scene first:

What was
Humility and faith at first,
May grow into self-confidence
And pride; and right, pursued too far
Or with unholy motive, grow
Into a wrong,—

inculcating the doctrine that all vices are but excesses of some virtue.

If I have preserved the unity of my plot and exhibited the character of Jephthah throughout, as it naturally would exhibit itself under the influence of this predominant passion, I have accomplished all I expected.

Mary Sharp College,
Winchester, Tenn.,
May 1, 1867.

A. M Green

AGUNS, Lexington ellias.

MISTORY.

ND after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel, Tola, the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim. And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir.

And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years. And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havoth-jair unto this

day, which are in the land of Gilead. And Jair died, and was buried in Camon. And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not him.

And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon. And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel eighteen years, all the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. Moreover, the chil-

dren of Ammon passed over Jordan, to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed.

And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim. And the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand. Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which

ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.

And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpeh. And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another, What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, and he was the son of a harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman. Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him.

And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob: And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be

our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, The Lord be a witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words.

Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh.

And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land? And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore restore those lands again peaceably. And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon; and said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon: but when Israel came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderness unto the Red Sea, and came to Kadesh; then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land: but the king of Edom would not hearken thereto. And in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab; but he would not consent. And Israel abode in Kadesh. Then they went along through the wilderness, and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon was the border of

Moab. And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon, king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land unto my place. But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. And the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they smote them: so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. So now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and

shouldest thou possess it? Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess. And now art thou any thing better than Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them, while Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? why therefore did ye not recover them within that time? Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the Lord the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon.

Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him.

Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon. And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.

So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against

them; and the Lord delivered them into his hands. And he smote them from Aroer even till thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I

can not go back. And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon. And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according

to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

CHARACTERS IN JEPHTHAM'S DAUGHTER.

Jернтнан—The Gileadite.

TELAH—His wife.

Adam—His daughter.

EBER—Betrothed of Adah.

MICAH—First captain of the guard.

HEZRON—Officer in charge of sick and

MIRIAM—Servant maid.

Men of Gilead.
Followers of Jephthah.
Musicians, attendants, and chorus
of young girls, in scene fifth.



Jephthah's Daughter.

Brene Pirst.

Time, morning—a room in Jephthah's house in Mizpeh—Jephthah and Telah alone.

TELAH.

GOEST thou forth upon the hills
To-day? I would thou stayed'st at home.
Rumors there are of yet a war
With Ammon and the Israelites,
And much I fear some danger may
Beset the path thou tread'st. These deeds
Of violence, and blood, and strife,
Suit not a woman's heart. Jephthah,
Stay here, I shall be happier.

3

JEPHTHAH.

'Tis ever thus with all thy sex, When glory beckons onward, then Would they, timid and shrinking, fain Forego the honor, for the fear.

TELAH.

Nay, Jephthah, nay, not so; at least, Not altogether so. Thou know'st In times of danger, woman may, Nerved by her love for those most dear, Be cool, and prompt, and ready, and Unflinching as a man; her mind As firm as his; her courage strong, And deathless even. But is't not this? Blood-glory hath no lure to tempt A woman's heart. In that, she sees Not the best good to those she loves, Nor yet the human race. Thus hath It been from the beginning, even;

Woman opposed to violence
And blood. *Man slays* and woman
mourns.

I'd fain persuade thee, Jephthah, from This life of danger, toil and fear, To quieter pursuits.

JEPHTHAH.

I do

Not bid thee, Telah, call thy maids,
And to thy loom and distaff, and
Thy 'broidery frames, as many a man
Might do. Attentively, I list
To all thou say'st, for pleasant is
Thy counsel ever unto me,
And all thy words of interest
Are sweet. Much do I owe to thee,
In that I've brought thee from thy friends,
And country, and thy kin, to this

Strange desert land, and linked so close Thy tender lovingness to my Rough ways. Too much of my lone life Thou'st cheered for me to turn away, Unheeding aught that thou would'st say. Fear not this strife of Ammon and The Israelites. I have no part In it. 'Tis true that Ammon hath Encroached still farther now. His host Hath camped in Gilead; so 'tis said, In Mizpeh's streets—a rumor brought The tidings yester-even—and yet Thou know'st, that tho' my brethren and All kindred of my tribe dwell there, I have no part among them, and Their quarrel is not mine. Yet tho' Cast out, an alien from my tribe, Can we not be as happy here, As if we dwelt in Gilead? Thou

And our sweet child, our Adah, dark-Eyed dove, are treasures quite enough For me, joined with the favor of Jehovah. He hath prospered me, And all to which I've put my hands, And spread my name abroad. 'Tis proof That He, whom I have served, hath work For me to do. 'T was thus of old He prospered those He set apart For great and worthy deeds. Thou dost Not shrink from duty, Telah, nor Would have me turn my back, when He Appoints the way?

TELAH.

Thou needest not To ask—and yet, I would we dwelt At peace with Gilead and thy kin. If they but knew thee as thou art,

They would admire and love, instead Of hating, and would bring thee home Again. My heart is sad whene'er I think of this estrangement, for A woman's nature yearns for love, And kindness from all those whom blood And duty make akin to her. So much, too, it affecteth thee, I grieve, For it hath warped thy mind, I fear Ofttimes, and made thee jealous, and Suspicious of thy kind: caused thee To set too high an estimate Upon men's thoughts of thee. What was Humility and faith, at first, May grow into self-confidence And pride; and right, pursued too far, Or with unholy motive, grow Into a wrong. That thus it is With thee, I know not; yet sometimes I fear. There is no sin, thou know'st, Jehovah winketh at, and least In those, by whom he manifests His power. Jephthah, turn not away. Wrong, in exalted privilege, With signal punishment, our God Hath ever visited.

JEPHTHAH.

Thou read'st
My secret thoughts, and canst not much
Esteem him whom thou hast divined
So well.

TELAH.

Because I do esteem

So much—because I think so well

Of Jephthah—that my fine gold is

So pure, is why I'd have no breath

Of taint upon it, and no speck

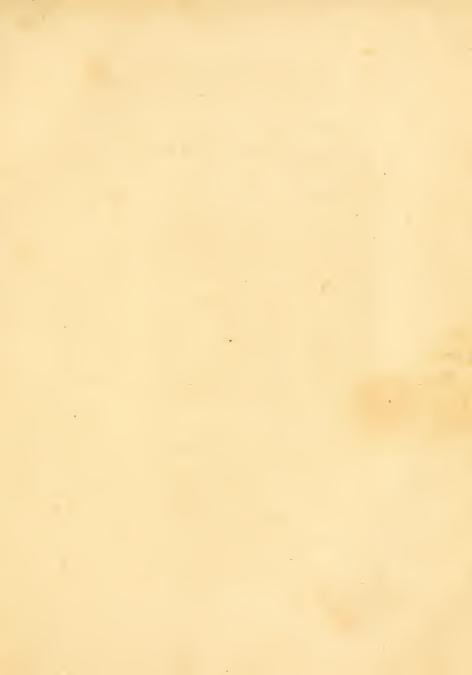
Of rust corrode.

'T is why I tell him all my mind,
How that I fear, sometimes, it may
Be needlessly, his mind is warped;
Jehovah's favor is not all
His heart desires; that he, too much,
Cares for his fellow-men's esteem,
And the world's honor. 'T is because
I love, I fear. Love, as thou know'st
Is anxious; hath a watchful heart,
A vigilant eye, and, for the loved
One, feels a coming evil, oft,
Ere it arrives.

(Enter an attendant, announcing guests.)

ATTENDANT.

Some Gileadites are come, who crave An audience of Jephthah. Shall I bring them here?





Interview with Jephthah.

JEPHTHAH.

Aye, bring them here.

TELAH.

I will retire. (She goes.)

JEPHTHAH. (Aside.)

What can they want Of Jephthah? All these many years, Have I dwelt here unsought, uncared For, and despised. Why seek me now?

(Enter Gileadites.)

Why come ye, men of Gilead,
This day, to me? Do ye not know
That Jephthah hath no part among
His father's sons? What errand is't
That brings ye here?

GILEADITES.

We come to tell Thee of our sore distress. Thou know'st

How all the tribes of Israel, for These many years, have suffered: how Jair, the Gileadite, was Judge, And, dying, slept in Camon: how Th' Israelites turned to strange gods, Ashtaroth, and Baalim, and The gods of Zidon, and the gods Of Syria, of Moab, and The Philistines, and of the sons Of Ammon, too, and did forsake Jehovah, and no longer serve Him. Then his anger wax-ed hot Against his people, and he sold Them into the Philistines' hands For eighteen years—all Israel that Was in the land of Gilead and The Amorite. And now they've crossed The Jordan—those bold Ammonites To take their lands from Judah, and

From Benjamin, and from the house Of Ephraim. We are sore distressed.

JEPHTHAH.

It is an ancient crime, to turn
Away from worshiping the true
And living God, and to bow down
To idols. Ye know that, all their days,
Hath Israel done this thing, since first
The golden calf was made within
The wilderness of Sin, and all
The people bowed them down to it.
Grievous it is, and grievously
The Lord hath ever punished it.

GILEADITES.

We know: we know Israel hath sinned; But now unto Jehovah, God, We've turned, confessing we have sinned, In that we've turned away from Him, And served Baalim.

JEPHTHAH.

And He bade Ye call upon the gods, whom ye Have chosen, to deliver you! 'T was just.

GILEADITES.

And then we cried again, and turned Away from heathen gods, and with Clean hearts did serve the Lord, and we Besought him He would do what seemed Him good, but to deliver us from Our enemy, but this one time. And now we know He pitieth The wretchedness of Israel. The Ammonitish host, e'en now, A multitude, are gathered and

Encamped in Gilead, and we Th' Israelites, assembled are, Scarce twenty bow-shots from thy home In Mizpeh.

JEPHTHAH.

Why are ye come here,
To tell these things to me? Long have
I known what hath befallen them—
Israel and Gilead. What is't
To me? Ye know I have no part
In Gilead. My brethren drove
Me out, and said, "Thou shalt have no
Inheritance with us." They could
Not take Jehovah's favor, else
Would they have that deprived me of.
But He hath prospered me and I
Have tried to serve Him. Valiant men
Have gathered to me, and the tribes

GILEADITES.

Therefore *-thou sayest-it is Because we wronged thee, and did do That very thing. Therefore we turn Again to thee, and pray thee to Go with us and to fight the hosts Of Ammon; then to take thy place In Gilead's house, and be our head Over all the men of Gilead. Thou wilt not, Jephthah, be more just Than God? we turned to *Him* and *He* Hath pitied us.

JEPHTHAH.

And if ye bring Me home again, to fight for you,

^{*} It would seem not unlikely, from the reply of the men of Gilead to Jephthah's question, and the manner of his asking it, that some of his brethren were among them.—Judges x1: 7, 8.

Against the hosts of Ammon, and If God, through me, deliver ye From out their hand, surely shall I Then be your head in Gilead?

GILEADITES.

God be a witness between thee And us, if we do not, even According to thy words.

JEPHTHAH.

Then will

I send my messengers, this day
Unto th' Ammonitish king,
Saying, "And what hast thou to do
With me, that thou art come against
Me now, to take away my land?
When Israel wandering, came up out
Of Egypt through the desert, then
They asked of Sihon, king of all

The Amorites, saying, 'Let us pass, We pray thee, through thy land unto Our place.' But he then gathered up His men, and fought all Israel, and The God of Israel gave Sihon And all his people unto them, The host of his own Israelites. So they possessed the lands of all Those Amorites, from Arnon even Unto Jabbok's hill, and to the flood Of Jordan, from the wilderness. Take thou the land which Chemosh, thine Own god, hath given thee to possess, And thus will we possess even whom The Lord, our God, shall drive out from Before our face. While Israel dwelt In Heshbon, and her towns, and in Aroer and her villages, And in the cities, which grew up

Along the shores of Arnon for Three hundred years, why did ye not Recover them in all that time? I have not trespassed thus on thee. Thou doest wrong to war against Me now. The Lord, the Judge, BE Judge This day between the children of His Israel and the Ammonites." Thus will I say to him, and send This day by some sure messenger. Then, peradventure, if the Lord Deliver Israel by my hand, I shall be head in Gilead. I'll be with ye anon. (Evit Gileadites.)

(Soliloquizing.) There's a Strong tie in blood. Affection may Be warm, and true, e'en unto death, But the affinity of blood Is something different. Friendship speaks

Sentiments of variance
With zeal, and warmth, and earnestness,
And blame, but is not friendship as
Before. The bond will break, and what
Remains is hollow mockery
Of seeming only, and no more.
Friendship mounts guard; observes the
rules,

The courtesies, civilities
Conventionalities of life,
But blood hath confidence in the
Born tie that holds together all,
And can dispense with forms.
Friendship asks favors; blood demands,
And feels it hath a right. Friendship
Aggrieved, can scarce converse about
A wrong, but weightier grows th' offense,

And wider is the breach than 'twas At first; and confidence again Returneth, never as before. 'Tis not in nature thus to be. But blood grows hot and leaps its bounds, And says hard words, and doeth wrong, E'en grievous wrong, but when the heat Of anger cools, and sorrow comes To him who said the words, and did The wrong, blood helpeth to forget, And to forget is to forgive. I know not yet, if I forgive; I know I've not forgotten, for The sting is here of all the taunts, And scorn, and wrong of earlier years. Yet sweet the triumph of the hour, And sweeter 't will be, when I am Deliverer of Israel, And head of Gilead. I feel

The power struggling within me, and My confidence unshaken that Jehovah's might will manifest Itself in me, and Ammon shall Be driven from all the lands he hath Usurped. Hear me, O! Lord, thou God Of Israel, if, without fail, Thou shalt deliver to my hands The hosts of Ammon, then it shall Be, that whatever cometh forth From out the doors of mine own house To meet me, when, victorious, I Return in peace, a conqueror of The Ammonites, shall surely be The Lord's, and I will offer it To Him for a burnt-offering.

ÉND OF ÉCENE ÉTRST.

Brene Berond.

Jephthah sitting in the door of his tent, after the Ammonites are subdued, his face buried in his hands.

JEPHTHAH.

(He rises and walks, soliloquizing.)

'T is over now, the victory is fairly won; Victory, to me, in senses more than one. Jehovah nerved this arm. An Ammonite

No vantage hath to fight an Israelite.

Baal-berith's strength, Baal-berith's mighty power,

Fail, ere the cloud-drops dry upon the flower,

And scattered thousands, on the bloodstained earth,

Embrace the soil that gave them first their birth.

E'en twenty cities more are Israel's own,

And through them Jephthah's name is proudly known;

That name once hated and cast out of men,

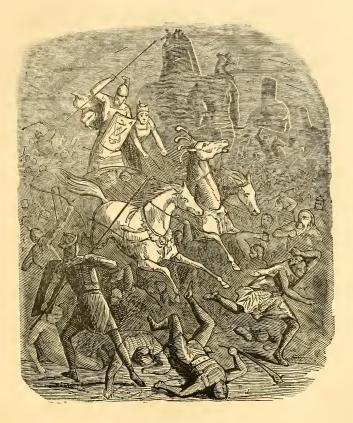
Who now entreat e'en Jephthah back again.

Oh! for this hour have I toiled and prayed,

And offerings on Jehovah's altar laid.

This hour, in fancy, have I thought so sweet,

None other could at all compare with it; The crowning moment of dull struggling years,



Battle Scene.



The hope made certain from the depth of fears.

'T is come at last, tho' tardily. No more An outcast, I may seek my father's door, Enter and be his child again; yea, claim My birthright, as the eldest of his name. Thanks to Jehovah! praise and glory be To Him who gave such joyful victory.

(Enter Eber.)

EBER.

Methought I heard thy signal calling me, My leader's summons should not be in vain.

JEPHTHAH.

I did not call, yet art thou welcome here.

Is all prepared for our departure, when The sun is risen in the east?

EBER.

All is prepared.

JEPHTHAH.

I am impatient now the conflict's past. Aroer, Minnith, and the towns between, E'en twenty cities of the Ammonites, Subdued, the country wrested from the foe,

The plain of vineyards bounds our conquests now,

And Ammon Israel need no longer fear.

All's done which I have come to do, and now

The land of Tob recalls my panting breast,

And weary limbs to rest them there, awhile, [smile

And two sweet faces I would fain see

In loving fondness as I come again. Thou'rt ready, Eber?

EBER.

Ready! yes, my sire.

Pardon my boldness that I dare recall

Thy promise of the bliss that should be mine

When this foray was over, won by thee.

Surely thou canst not think I'd linger here!

My thoughts will far outstrip the stately march

My feet must keep among thy cooler hosts

That have no promised bride to greet, When Mizpeh opens to their coming sight. I would we went to-night, and need not wait
The op'ning day.

JEPHTHAH.

Ah! youth is ever thus, Impatient of a short delay. It is a stern, Hard lesson, man must learn, to bide his time,

Nor strive to hasten what betideth him. 'T will come, at last, be 't good or ill, and thou

Wilt find many events thou 'dst fain delay;

While there are others, that we wait so long,

So anxiously, and with such feverish thought [while

Boding, and brooding; hoping, fearing,

The heart, sick with its own impatience, feeds

Upon itself, and eats its own core out, Ere the desire's accomplished. Such, have I

Felt in the long and dreary years gone by,

My son—for gladly shall I call thee so, I have none other; thou and she are all—These heart-sick feelings may'st thou never know;

Nor canst thou, for thy lot will not be mine,

Brave, cherished scion of a noble line.

EBER.

Pardon my far presuming, if I ask
Hath Jephthah's name not been an
honored one,

Famed, among Gilead's hills, for valor and

Such wisdom as a leader well becomes?

Did not men gather to his standard, and

Did he not then instruct, reform and prove,

Not leader only, but their benefactor, too?

Taming their fierce hearts to a calm control,

Making them better, happier than before?

Hath not the poor blessed Jephthah, as he passed,

And orphans' tears, and widows' grateful prayers,

Have they not, too, been offered up for thee?

And now, to thine inheritance restored,

Leader of Gilead's submissive hosts, Thou, sure, art satisfied!

JEPHTHAH.

Yea, satisfied.

It is for this I've toiled and planned so long,

E'en from that hour of causeless wrong, when they

Did say to Jephthah, in his father's house, And he, that father, said not one faint "Nay,"

"Begone!" * * * *

My heart hath nourished, in its secret core,

Those taunting words, those gestures of contempt,

Those haughty looks, when bent their brows on me,

In bitter, biting scorn. Thou know'st not what

It is to feel one's self derided, mocked, Jeered at with insult, hatred, foulest wrong;

To bear gibes, sneers, and looks askant, that say

"Thou 'rt made of meaner, dirtier clay than we;"

While he that should protect thee with an arm

Of power, stands silently and coldly by, And not a glance of kindness warms his eye.

I hate the memory of those torturing years,

When oft with wild desire yet feeble hope I sought for kindly offices, yea, menial ones,

E'en abject servitude, if by it I might gain

But one approving glance, humbling myself

E'en to the very dust, and yet repelled As some loathed and degraded object, when

My soul was full of lofty thoughts, and full

And free forgiveness, melting love and joy

In my great, overmastering desire

To be beloved; or less, kindly endured.

O! Eber, I have borne all this, and more;

And, in stern silence, nursed such bitter wrongs

As would have made me desperate, wert not

For those most precious ones, my wife and child;

And for the confidence my time would come.

'Tis not what men may say of us that makes

Us vile: 'tis what we do. The wrong must be

Within ourselves; lives out of sight ofttimes,

And like the fruit of Sodom's apple, fair

And good to outward view, the foul, black heart

Hath but the dust and ashes of deceit Within.

(Enter Micah, first Captain of the Guard, with a respectful salute to Jephthah.)

MICAH.

What disposition wilt thou that we make

Of all the prisoners to-night? Our band Is small, thou know'st.

JEPHTHAH.

See to't they be secure.

Let a strict watch be set of one in ten; Fewer might be unsafe: and let none sleep

Upon his post. Our band is small, be sure,

Some less than when we left our homes, and yet

Fewer are gone than we might have supposed,

Thanks to the justice of our cause and that

Great Power that hath protected us.
They're safe—

Our hostages, the chief men of the foe-

The Ammonites? They must be guarded with Untiring vigilance.

МІСАН.

Enough, my lord,
'T is Kadesh hath the charge of them,
and he
Will not a whit abate his constant care.
A desert lion is he to his prey, and none
Shall plunder it from him. Escape
Is scarcely possible, when he hath charge.
His fierce eye never seems in need of
sleep.

JEPHTHAH.

'T is well; I know none I could better trust.

(Turns away.)

EBER. (To Micah.)

Say, Micah, wilt not thou rejoice, when this

One night is over in this bloody land,

And we turn homeward to the quiet shade,

And pleasant rest of Mizpeh's sheltering walls?

мисан.

Why, lad, art not afraid to tarry here? Thou did'st use gloriously the bow and spear,

And, for so young a lad, dost promise well; [come?

Yet blenchest thou because the dark has

EBER.

Out on thee, Micah! Nay, ten thousand nays.

Blanches my cheek nor at the dark, nor blood,

Though thou dost taunt me with my youth

And fear, a thing unknown to me. Thy age

Protects thee, else should'st thou repent thy taunts.

Surely there is no wrong that I'll rejoice To tread once more in Mizpeh's streets. My home

Is there. (Turns and walks indignantly away.)

TEPHTHAH.

Nay, Eber, curb thy heart of fire: Remain.

MICAH. (Aside.)

A hot head truly! I had best take care. (Aloud to Jephthah.)

What preparations for the morning shall we make?

TEPHTHAH.

None, save to start at rising sun.
Let a picked company of archers lead
The way. Next, march the prisoners,
two and two,

And spearmen close behind. The wounded then,

In litters take the way, while all the rear

Shall covered and protected be, of right, By the most trusty of my veteran band.

MICAH.

Thou art determined that our pris'ners keep

Their lives secure?—the Ammonitish king

And his chief men, by whose advice he brought

This war on Israel? Is 't well, my lord? Our fathers did not so. The heathen they

Spared not, but slew them, small and great.

JEPHTHAH.

Micah, thou dost forget thyself, yet for Past services, I overlook thy forwardness.

Thou art a veteran, brave and trusty, too,

And so I tell thee that we war not with A fallen foe to practice cruelty.

These hostages are better for the peace Of Gilead than if all their necks were merged In one, and severed at a blow. Know'st not

That mercy, oftentimes, availeth more Than strict, nay, even just severity?

We have not fought as Joshua, at God's Command, to drive the heathen from the land,

But to repel encroachment, and when they

Who did the thing, submit, it is enough.

MICAH.

Thou dost command our forces by the way?

JEPHTHAH.

Even so: I lead our brave victorious band

To Mizpeh's gates, and there dismiss them to

Their homes. But the picked guard I leave to march

With the poor sufferers in this bloody fray,

And our illustrious prisoners will be

Commanded by this noble youth. (Aside.)
'T is time

He try his powers, if he be worthy of the prize

I've promised him. (To Eber.) Eber, upon the way

See thou the Ammonitish king, and all, Be treated generously, and yet take care He be most strictly watched in word and deed.

EBER.

I fear thy captains will not like to be Subjected to my orders. One so young Hath not enough experience to be Thus trusted, thus exalted over all The brave, tried followers of thy veteran band.

Wilt please thee, name some other one?

MICAH. (Aside.)

Beshrew

Me, but the lad has sense. If 'twere not for

Such modest airs no step of mine should stir, [dawn.

To do his bidding, at the morrow's

JEPHTHAH.

Eber, I will thou take the lead. I'll have
No other one. Look to it, Micah, that

All yield obedience to him as if

It were myself. Dost hear?

MICAH.

Dost think

Me deaf? I hear as well as any one. I know my duty, too, and shall not fail To do it.

EBER.

Micah, thou hear'st what
Jephthah says: [struct
Thou must be privy counsellor, and inMe as to all that I must say and do.
Then 't will be well: I have great confidence
In thee.

МІСАН.

I'll do it, lad. Thy judgment's good. (Aside.) I'm quite content. (To Jephthah.) Hast any more commands?

JEPHTHAH.

Send Hezron here. (Exit Micah: enter Hezron.)

(To Hezron.) The wounded, how are they?

HEZRON

Some better, and some worse.

JEPHTHAH,

The litters, for To-morrow's use,—are they all ready now?

HEZRON

All are made ready, or will be before We sleep.

JEPHTHAH.

'T is well. And can all be removed?

HEZRON.

All can who live.

JEPHTHAH.

Then some are dead and some
Must die? Who are they, Hezron, who?

HEZRON.

Even now

They pile the earth on Asher's noble son,

And cover Menon's glorious face. Kedar's

Life slowly ebbs away. The arrow points,

The spears, have done their deadly work.
All else

Are doing well.

JEPHTHAH. (Covering his face.)

Alas! my friends: how dear Were they to me. My counsellors are gone.

I would they might have died in Mizpeh. Oh!

'Tis hard to leave them here.

(He crosses the stage two or three times, then says:)

Our wounded ones-

Thou'lt see all is prepared to shield from pain

And suffering by the way? Eber has charge

Whene'er 'tis needful for their comforting,

To stay the band till they would fain proceed.

HEZRON

Thou'rt mindful, Jephthah, more than is thy wont:

Thou'st left these things to me before.

JEPHTHAH.

So now

I do, but I am sick of blood. Go now, I trust thee, as I ever did. (To Eber.) To rest:

A few short hours of calm repose will fit

Us better for to-morrow's toil.

Énd or Écene Ércond.

Brene Shird.

Time, sunset. A room opening upon a balcony facing the west. Telah and Adah alone.

ADAH.

MOTHER, hast seen the sky more bright, At golden sunset, than to-night? See'st thou, how every quivering leaf Stands out in delicate relief Against the sky beyond, unrolled Like some rich curtain's ample fold? See, too, my gentle flowers, how they Turn round to watch the close of day. It seems as if, like me, they've power T'enjoy the beauty of the hour.

There, softly creeping, Arnon's rills Wind at the foot of Gilead's hills, Twining, like silver threads, around The base of each sun-lighted mound. Dost thou not love to gaze, like me, On all this gorgeous tracery, As, gloriously, the weary sun Sinks to his rest, when day is done? In such an hour as this, would I, Dear mother, lay me down to die; Pillow my head, at close of day, And pass, with sunset's light, away.

TELAH.

Surely it is a glorious sight,
And much I love its varied light,
Replete with fondest memory,
And thoughts of hope and love for
thee;

But now my heart is far away.

Where is thy father, child, to-day?

A weight seems pressing on me here—

I hope the best, yet greatly fear

That in this conflict, some strong arm

May chance to do him serious harm.

HACCA.

Oh! mother, let such fears depart,
They're but a sickness of the heart,
Because he's gone so far from home:
Thou wilt be happier when he's
come.

Jehovah's arm hath power, we know, To shield from every deadly blow. To Baalim, nor Ashtaroth, we Have never learned to bow the knee, And Israel's God, in whom we trust, Is merciful, as well as just. But why this new and fearful war That calls my father off so far? Why at the head of Gilead fight? Surely, he's not a Gileadite?

TELAH. (As if communing with herself.)

Yea, formerly he hath been one:— Of Gilead, he 's the eldest son.

HACA.

Then why dwell here, dear mother, say, From his inheritance away?
Each Israelitish son hath space
Allotted for a dwelling-place,
And why should he forswear his home,
Within the wilderness to roam?
The desert land of Tob is not,
Like Canaan's soil, a favored spot.
And why did Gilead let him come?
His first-born son should dwell at home,

To cheer his sire's remaining space
Of life; then take his place.
Like foolish Esau, he hath not
His privilege so much forgot
That he should sell his birthright, and
Become a stranger in the land

TELAH.

He had no birthright.

HACA.

And yet thou Didst say, my mother, even now, That he was Gilead's first-born son!

TELAH.

E'en so. What hath been done is done. The wrongs thy father's youth befell, Thy grandsire's shame, that I should tell.

It fitteth not, at least not now,
For on that fair and open brow
Thus early, it were sure to fling
Too much of sorrow's saddening;
Nor would I, with harsh memories,
Make lonelier such hours as these.

ADAH.

I'll try to yield obedience,
But scarce can drive the feeling hence
To beg of thee to gratify,
This once, my curiosity;
For faint remembrances come o'er
Th' inquiring mind of scenes of yore:
Of hard-browed men that gathered round,

With voices threatening in their sound: Of fleeing to the wilderness
To find us, there, a resting-place:—

Of other men, too, one by one,
Adding to Jephthah's strength their own,
Till, leader of a mighty clan,
They called him a most valiant man.
I've sometimes thought these things a
dream—

For all such memories are dim—
But once, when in our garden-bower,
My father spent a lonely hour
Scanning the ground, with downcast
eyes,

I thought to give a glad surprise, So stole around, with noiseless step, While on the ground his eyes he kept, And communed with himself, as if His heart was overcharged with grief.

TELAH.

But he said nothing, did he?

ADAH.

Yea.

TELAH.

Thou didst not listen?

HACA.

Surely, nay,

At least, not meaningly; but I Was there, thinking to catch his eye Beaming with smiles, and hear him say How is my little girl to-day? So waiting, there I stood,—

TELAH.

And he

Talked with himself, and not with thee? Thou should'st have come away.

.HACCA

I know

I ought, but did not then.

TELAH.

And so

Thou heard'st him talk—of what?

HACCA.

'T was of the past he spake: I thought He called it dread and bitter past, And wished Oblivion might cast Her mantle over it, that he Might all forget its memory: That his was but an outcast's name, Born to a heritage of shame; Reproaches to endure from those Who should be friends, but were his foes;

And that they yet should gladly claim Kindred with Jephthah's hated name. What more he said I did not hear, For, trembling with an unknown fear, I turned away, marveling much
What dread calamity could touch
The secret springs that caused to flow
So bitterly those words of woe.
I wondered what dark heritage
Of shame could cloud his manly age;
If he had wronged his kinsmen, or
What else his heart was grieving for,
And yet no injury, I knew,
To friend or foe, could Jephthah do.
But who they were that yet should claim,

Gladly, connexion with his name, I now can guess.

TELAH.

How didst thou learn?

HACA.

Theirs are the faces darkly stern,

Of those who, in my memory yet
Remain freshly as if I met
Them every day. I do, at night,
Oft see them in my dreams,—the fright
Wakes me in terror, and I shroud
My face, and almost weep aloud.

TELAH.

I told thee naught.

HACA.

Save thou didst say That he was Gilead's son; and they Are his younger brethren. Is't not so?

TELAH.

Thou hast conjectured right—and know The time, of which he spake, is come: Entreatingly called home, by those Thou heard'st him mention as his foes, He, even now, their leader, fights Against th' encroaching Ammonites.

HACA.

Mother, thy words encourage me; Wilt thou not tell me who was she That gave him birth?

TELAH.

She was no Jew
Of Jacob's line, but lineage drew
From outcast Ishmael. The sire
Of thine saw her and loved. Desire
Sprung up—no law had made them one,
And yet the fruit—

HACA.

Was what?

TELAH.

A son.

HACA.

Long, long have I conjectured this,
That some such sad remembrances
Clouded my father's cheerless past,
And darkness, o'er his future cast;
Yet scarcely deemed such mark of shame
Was stamped upon my father's name;
That God's own courts, to enter in,
He could not, so defiled with sin.
Ere this such truth I should have heard:
Innocently I may have erred,
But then thou knowest, and canst tell,
If thou hast conned this matter well.

TELAH.

To none, my child, has wrong been done,
And, least of all, to Eslon's son.
God, in his mercy, gave to us

No sons to feel this dreaded curse, But one dear child, whose progeny From all such stain is counted free.

HACCA.

Then will I grieve o'er it no more,
The past no sorrow can restore.
But what of her—dear mother, say,
Hath yet the earth-worm claimed its
prey?

Far better fate than it would be To lead such life of misery.

TELAH.

She was forsaken soon and spurned
By him whose flattering tongue had
learned

Her heart to throb with feelings wild For one whose passion had beguiled Her into sin. She sought return
To her own country, there to mourn,
Till death should come, the final loss
Of that to which all else is dross.
Nor long did she her frailty weep,
And tearful vigils nightly keep,
But like those clouds, at close of day,
Gently and calmly passed away.
O'er her cold corse fresh flowers they
strewed,

And, with their tears, her grave bedewed,
For she was fair and beautiful
As roses that we love to cull,
And like a bud, with canker worn,
Or from its stem that's rudely torn,
She faded in her loveliness,
Yet lives in their remembrances
Who knewher ere her heart was crushed,
And its sweet music sadly hushed.

ADAH.

And then my grandsire took a wife?

TELAH.

He did before; and bitter strife
Was mingled with each household
word,

While angry thoughts and feelings stirred

The breasts of those *she* bare to him, And, with success, they strove to dim A father's love for his first-born, That they, with words of biting scorn, Might cast him out. The deed was done, The father sanctioned, and the son Warned to depart, while tauntingly They jeered him with fierce mockery; Scoffed at his birth, saying "The son Of a strange woman should be gone:"

Nay, more; with brutal violence They thrust him out, and drove him thence.

* * * * * * *

Aye! there are words that tear apart
The fibers of the crushing heart;
That stretch its fragile strings so much
They burst asunder, at a touch;
That sweep its gentle chords of song
With floods of grief so wild and
strong,

That harsh, discordant sounds alone
Swell forth, in place of happier tone;
Yea, that, with master-passion fraught,
Drive out each sweet and peaceful
thought,

Till perish all the flowers of feeling, Its naked depths alone revealing.

HACCA.

Mother, they 're past, those dreary years
Of insult, wrong, and burning tears,
And now the wronged one, with his calm
And quiet dignity, like the palm,
Judea's stately emblem, soon will be
Ruler of Gilead, for victory
Shall crown his efforts, and all they
Who mocked at him shall feel his sway;
His mild and gentle yet decided rule
That bows the trusting heart and leaves
it full

Of meek submission, timid love and awe, To find his slightest wish, his look, a law.

How my glad thoughts go springing forth to meet

My precious sire, whose every wish 't is sweet

For me, at all times, gladly to obey.

Mother, how lonely 'tis, when he's away;
The house is desolate, the dusky walls
Sad echoes whisper, as my footstep falls
Lightly upon the stone-paved courts
and I

Hear solemn wailings in each night-bird's cry.

The bulbul, 'mid the clumps of roses, where

The fountain throws its spray upon the air, Weeps mournful plaining at the midnight hour

From out the fragrance of her fav'rite bower,

And my sad heart seems shrouded with its own

Dismal forebodings, when we're thus alone.

TELAH.

- Cheer thee, my child—patiently hope the best,
- The hour is drawing nigh for nightly rest.
- Thou'rt weary and dispirited, sweet child,
- And the dark tale, I told thee, hath beguiled
- No one of those dark shadows from a brow
- Where they've too often cast their gloom, ere now.
- Throw them aside, and that thy happy dreams
- May be as sunlight on the flashing streams Of fair Judea's soil, thy lute bring here,

And pour its melody within my ear,

To charm my boding heart of all its fear.

HACA.

Wilt listen, mother, while I sing?

TELAH.

Ah, yes,

For ever had thy voice a power to bless

From the first hour its feeble wail was heard,

And all a mother's love my bosom stirred,

Up to this night of painful solitude,

When dark'ning shadows drape the fading wood,

And settle gloomily upon my soul.

Yea, sing; music may yet control

The fiercely struggling powers as I shall hear

Thy pleasant melodies fall on my ear.

(Adah claps her hands and a young girl enters.)

HACCA.

Miriam, bring hither now thy lute and play

Thy choicest melodies, to drive our gloom away.

Meanwhile, to thy accompanying, I'll sing.

(Miriam retires for a moment, and, returning, begins a prelude on her instrument. Adah sings, Miriam accompanying.)

ADAH AND MIRIAM.

song.

O! why should hearts be sad When there's so much to glad? When earth, so bright and fair, Should charm our every care? Judea's vales are green, Judea's skies, serene, Judea's maidens, fair, Her sons brave, every-where.

CHORUS.

Then let our hearts, to-night, Beat high, with pulses light, And glad the fleeting hours With music, joy, and flowers.

song.

Judea's sons will toil
For honor's goodly spoil,
And with the bold and free
Wait glorious destiny.
Judea's maidens, fair,
Sustain, with loving care,
Daughter, sister, and wife,
The crowning gift of life.

CHORUS.

Then let our hearts, to-night, Beat high, with pulses light, And glad the fleeting hours With music, love, and flowers.

HACA.

Sadly my voice seemeth to jar
With all such bright imagining;
I turn to him, who still afar,
I'd fain to this lone circle bring

song.

Night draweth on and we're alone
Within a stranger land,
We long to see and cling to thee,
Grasping thy friendly hand;
Father, come home.

The sighing breeze sweeps thro' the trees

With such a dreary sound,

I turn my head to list thy tread:
Thou art not to be found;
Father, come home.

The sun's last ray, athwart the way,
Lengthens the plane-tree's shade,
While evening's gloom steals thro' the
room,

And darkness fills the glade; Father, come home.

The tinkling bells, adown the dells,
Where browsing camels stray,
With drowsy chime, recall the time,
When thou wert not away;
Father, come home.

Sad are our hearts when day departs,
And twinkling stars appear,
With milder light, to rule the night,
Whispering thou art not here;
Father, come home.

(An attendant enters, and, with a low obeisance, hands a missive to Telah. She clips the thread and reads aloud.)

"Rejoice with me, my loved ones there,
The strife is ended. I prepare
E'en now to take my homeward way,
Victor in this most mighty fray.
Aroer, Minnith, twenty cities yield
To Gilead on the bloody field.
His arm gave strength, our foes to overcome,

Those Ammonites, and now for joy and home!"

TELAH.

Miriam, it is the hour for evening service, call

Our minstrels to come hither, one and all,

To join together in a glorious song

For all Jehovah's done. To him belong

Deep gratitude for what His hand hath wrought;

That through a land with danger thickly fraught

He hath preserved the husband, father, friend,

And master: praise to Jehovah without end.

(Miriam retires to execute Telah's commands, and Adah resumes her singing.)

ADAH.

His hand kept thee, unscathed and free, Through all war's wild alarm, And we'll rejoice, with heart and voice, To greet thee, free from harm; Father, come home.

(Musicians enter and arrange themselves, and Telah addresses them.)

TELAH. (To the musicians.)

Your boldest, gladdest strains to-night will be [and me, The most approved by this young maid Jephthah, unharmed, in a few days will come

To greet us all within our quiet home, For signal victory his arms hath crowned, And Gilead gains the wide-spread country round; And now, proud Israel's ruler, he, From such a conquest, is most sure to be.

song.

On they came with power and might, Like a torrent of the night, And they struggled in the fight, But Jehovah's mighty hand Scattered the presumptuous band, And *He* drove them from the land.

One voice chanting.—Trust in Jehovah, for He is mighty, and His mercy endureth forever.

All the efforts made, must fail Of the gods, that rule the vale Chemosh, Ashtaroth and Baal. Of Jehovah's power we tell With the victories that befell Wandering, chosen Israel. Voice chanting.—Trust in Jehovah, &c.

Earth must yield her to *His* nod,
Princes bow and kiss *His* rod,
Heathen nations own *Him* God,
Mighty, merciful and just,
Hurling nations to the dust
When they cease in *Him* to trust

Voice chanting.—Trust in Jehovah, &c.

Yet the lowliest ever may
Feel His mighty arm their stay,
As they travel on their way;
So, to no vain idol cling,
But the heart's pure offering
To Jehovah-jireth bring.

Voice chanting.—Trust in Jehovah, for He is mighty, and His mercy endureth forever.

Knd of Scene Bhird.

Brene Pourth.

Jephthah, a few followers with him, approaching his home in Mizpeh. He dismisses them.

JEPHTHAH.

Go, now, my tried and trusty followers, And as each one shall take his homeward way,

May ye, arrived, in mercy find 't is well With those ye left behind. E'en so, with me,

That I find, too, all's well within the walls

That hold my heart's most precious ones. Farewell.

(They disappear in different directions, and he soliloquizes.)

- Why sinks my heart with such chill weight of dread?
- Why shake my knees, as if no strength were left
- In this strong, stalwart frame, as I do look
- Upon the sheltering boughs above the roof
- Where dwell my treasures all? My eyes are dim;
- They have no power to look at those gray walls
- That pen my little fold—the youngling and
- Its dam.—Home! sweetest spot of all the earth.
- A few more eager steps, and I am there;

- Yet something still those longing steps restrains.
- What if she haste to meet me here?—
 or that
- Dear one, my other self? Oh! would 't were past
- That I might know the worst, and knowing, fear
- No more. Uncertainty! how dread the thought
- Of what this hand may be compelled to do.
- (Music is heard, and Adah comes with tabrets and dances to meet him.)
- 'T is she! 't is she! My one ewe lamb! Oh, this
- Is more than I can bear! Most dutiful
- And loving child of all Judea's maids,

She comes, with signs of overmastering joy,

To greet her sire, who dooms his child to death

In all her virgin innocence! Punished! And more, for all my wild ambition now.

(Adah, seeing his wild, disordered looks and torn
garments, stops.)

HACA.

O! Father, speak to me.

(Jephthah, having covered his face with his hands, as if to shut her from his sight, stands motion-less.)

He will not speak,

He will not look at me!

JEPHTHAH.

I can not, for My heart is burst with grief.





Jephthah's Return.

HACA.

Who speaks of grief, Returning from such signal victory?
Leader of Gilead—

JEPHTHAH.

O! name it not— Most hateful thought that ever crossed my brain.

HACKA.

Greatly rejoiced my mother dear and I
To hear the tidings of thy messenger,
And scarce have slept for very joy, that
thou

Wast safe from all the dangers that beset Thy path among such deadly foes. Thou com'st,

And with a daughter's loving tenderness

And overflowing sympathy, with what I deemed thy great, full joy at this that shall

Exalt thee over Gilead, I haste

To meet thee with a gladdened step. Not one

Embrace! no father's fond, warm kiss!

Sweet word of loving welcome! O! not e'en

A look! O! father, what means this? When thou

Hast come from off the hills with all thine armed

Men proudly at thy back, with valor flushed,

Thou'st bade me to thy arms, as if 't were joy

Beyond the battle's victory, to clasp

Thy child again. But now, thou heed'st me not!.

JEPHTHAH.

My daughter, thou hast brought me very low.

ADAH.

I, father!

JEPHTHAH.

Thou 'rt one of them that trouble me.

ADAH.

What have I done? Thou dost not hate me now?

It can not be! Thou lov'st me, father? Say

But that, and I can bear it all!

JEPHTHAH.

Love thee,

My precious child!—yea, better than my life.

HACCA.

I knew 't was so, yet thou didst look so cold;

Had no kind word of greeting for mine ear—

I have done naught to anger thee?

JEPHTHAH.

Nay, nay—

Thou never didst, my own sweet child.

Thou gav'st

Me never slightest cause for grief, till now.

HACKA.

Why now? Pray tell me all. Strong in thy love,

And in the sweet assurance of such cheering words,

I'm ready for the worst. Fear not for me.

'T were better over. Let the pang, I pray, be short.

JEPHTHAH.

I've opened to the Lord my mouth; I can
Not now go back——

HACA.

My father, if unto the Lord, thy God, Thou'st opened thy mouth, do unto me According to the vow thy lips have made, For on our enemies, the Ammonites, His vengeance hath he taken by thy hand.

JEPHTHAH.

My child, thou break'st my heart!

.HACCA

Nay, father, nay—

My disobedience and disregard

Of all Jehovah's laws would break thy heart.

Do I not owe to thee my life? And should

That life be dearer to me than the right?

Than Jephthah's full approval of his God?

I'm Jephthah's child, his only one, and should

Men say in Israel: "She did defy

The law, mocked at her father's words; set them

At naught?" That were far worse than death, for God,

Thy God, hath armed thy right hand with His power;—

Hath smote thine enemies before thy face,

E'en as thou asked. And now, shall we withhold

That which thy lips did promise unto Him?

We dare not mock Him thus: a jealous God

He is, and the iniquity of him

That doeth wrong shall be (thou know'st the law)

Upon his children surely visited.

I could not then escape. 'T is not so great

A sacrifice.

JEPHTHAH.

O! say not so! My all,

And nothing else. O, reckless vow! O, wild

Ambition to be first, where I have been Spurned and insulted! Mad desire to show

Jehovah's power in me; that He approved

The banished brother, unacknowledged son

Pride! pride! the great archangel's damning sin,

That drove him out of Paradise! Ah, mel

My punishment, like Cain's, is more than I

Can bear. He slew his brother, only; I Must kill my child.

· ADAH.

Not thus did Job bewail His children slain, his wealth all rifled in

An hour. Not thus did faithful Abraham,

When God, to try his faith, commanded him

To take his only son, the promised seed, To lone Moriah's steep, and offer him Upon its heights, a smoking sacrifice. Yea, father, in Jehovah, God, trust now As thou hast ever done: He doeth right.

JEPHTHAH.

I thank thee for those words. 'T is the one drop

That 's pleasant in this cup of bitterness, That hopeful thought of holy Abraham. God did provide the lamb: He may again.

ADAH.

Nay, nay, I meant not that—only that he

Did not bewail or hesitate, when God

Commanded him to take his only son,

The promised seed, in whom all nations should

Be blessed, and bind him to the ready pile.

I had forgot the rest.

JEPHTHAH.

And so should I.

Daughter, I am rebuked. God did but try

His faith. I must be punished for my sin,

For that desire of exaltation, so intense That it forgot all else.

(Adah makes no reply, but stands with one hand over her eyes, her head bent down in a thoughtful attitude. Jephthah noticing it, and seeing she makes no reply to what he has said, gloomily continues, as if to himself.)

I wonder not she has no word for me.

ADAH.

I have; I have. What askest thou?

My mind

Was buried in its thoughts.

JEPHTHAH.

And I would ask What were those thoughts?

HACA.

Of death, of leaving thee, My mother, all I love; to be no more.

Of the dark grave, and what a contrast in

My early youth to lay me down within Its narrow walls, shut from the glorious light

Of heaven; and for companionship, instead

Of thee and her, the greedy, gloating worm.

JEPHTHAH, (weeping.)

Go on.

ADAH.

The shivering cold for warmth, darkness For light, silence for pleasant sounds, these limbs,

Rigid and still, instead of airy life's Quick, varied movements; and drear loneliness

For most beloved companionship. Yet think

Not that I shrink, appalling though it be—

Right must be done, whate'er the cost to me.

I have no fear; like Job, I, too, can say,

"Though worms devour this skin of mine, yet in

My flesh shall I see God." Father, thy vow

Must be fulfilled! Yet make I one request.

JEPHTHAH.

Thou couldst ask nothing that I would not grant.

HACCA

Give me, I pray thee, two short months, in which

What was to be. I did look forward to The time, my height of joy should be to make

Another happy, and I thought too much,

It may be, of the bliss that should be mine

When yet another should dwell in our home,

Alike beloved by her and thee and me,

And sons and daughters should be born to thee

In place of those Jehovah had denied

To thine own wedlock. No sweet, cherub lip,

Pressed close to mine, shall ever call me by

That dearest name that woman ever hore.

I'll not repine; my grief is not my own: 'T is thine, and hers, and his. O, God! for him—

JEPHTHAH.

My daughter, Adah, wilt thou break my heart?

HACA.

Nay, father, nay; but I do think of him,—

Eber, in all his young and joyous years Doomed to be desolate; to bear a heart Widowed, bereaved, just as he enters on Life's opening threshhold; his bright morning sky

Beclouded ere life's sun had fairly risen.

Thou wilt console him; let him be to thee

E'en as he would have been, although no bride

His yearning heart find here. Thou'lt promise this?

JEPHTHAH.

I promise all. Say on. Ask what thou wilt.

HACA.

My mother loves me, father. O! how can

She bear to be alone? Her child reft from

Her arms, and none to dwell with her: alone!

Oh! comfort her.

JEPHTHAH.

And who shall comfort me? Thou think'st of all, of every one but me.

Hast thou no love for me? Shall I not, too,

Be left alone? Will not my home be dark?—

My heart be desolate? Hast thou no love

For me, my child?

HACA.

Ah, yes, too much for all.
Forgive me if I thought of others first,
Each is so dear; it is so hard to feel
I can no longer have a place among
Ye all; can come no more with heart
so full

Of gushing love, to cheer in sorrow, soothe

In suffering hours, and be a part of all, In joy or grief.

JEPHTHAH.

Look, Adah; there she comes! How shall I meet her? Oh! how break To her this woe?

HACA.

I will away, I can Not meet her now. Thy blessing, once more,

Father, on thine Adah's head.

(She kneels. He places his hand on her head. Telah comes in full view, as he does it, and the curtain drops.)

Énd of Scene Fourth.





Mourning over the Grave.

Brene Fifth.

"And the daughters of Israel went out, four days in the year, to mourn and tament for her."

Scene—the mountain, with trees and rocks. A green mound, under which are the remains of Jephthah's daughter. To one side, and partially hidden, is Eber, the betrothed of Adah, bowed under a covering of sackeloth. From the opposite side of the stage advance six maidens, clad in white robes, carrying baskets of flowers, and singing as they come.

MAIDENS.

song.

Here we come, a band of maidens,
To these lonely rocks and glades;
Bright the blue sky bends above us,
Cool and green, the leafy shades.

Come we here to mourn a lost one, Loved and lost one to bewail: Fitting spot for lamentation O'er our lost one of the vale.

It was here she was lamenting,

Till two moons had paled and gone,
Gaining strength, and faith, and courage,
In these solitudes, alone.

On the mountain, where she perished, Where she spent those lonely days, Every year we come to mourn her, Come, this noble maid to praise.

(They discover Eber sitting on the far side of the mound. He slowly raises the sackcloth from his face, and they see who it is. A maiden speaks.)

MAIDEN.

Comest thou here to mourn and weep, Eber? Worthy was she that's here Beneath this lonely mound.

EBER.

Ye come

But once a year, for she was naught To you but a sweet friend. To me My sun, my life—my every thing; And I come—when, I scarcely know, Nor, yet, how long I stay. There is No joy remaining, now, save here To bow by this green mound and feel.

I shall be with her soon. How long! How long! Oh, cruel vow! Was He,

The God of mercy, pleased with such A sacrifice?

MAXDEN

Eber, thou griev'st As one that hath no hope.

EBER.

Grief is

No name for all the pangs I feel; For, with such love as I have borne, 'T is the survivor dies. Long woe, With ecstasy of torture, kills At last—but O! how long. No death The dying hath, like unto that The living feels, to wander on Alone; of all earth's joys bereft— Its glorious sun extinct; life's light To darkness turned, and all its flowers To noxious weeds; the poor, numb soul, Unknowing when 't is change of day, Or night, or seasons, e'en. The crushed, Torn heart-strings, rent away from all About which twined their joy, Lie trampled, bleeding, thrilled with pain,

And yet there's no desire to take
Them up, and soothe, and nurse them
back

To ease, and strength, and life again.

The once glad, joyous heart, bounding

In youthful gladsomeness, crushed down,
A heavy lead-like thing within
The bosom's core, which ne'er again
Uplifts itself, but slowly wears
Its lingering tenement away,
Mourning a form that hath none,
and

A voice it can not hear.

(He slowly moves away.)

(Six voices chanting separately, as numbered.)

FIRST VOICE.

Joy beamed in her eye as she went forth to meet him.

SECOND VOICE.

Skill born of her gladness brought mirth from the tabret.

THIRD VOICE.

Fleet moved her light steps in the joy of his coming.

FOURTH VOICE.

She met him; her eye beamed no longer in brightness.

FIFTH VOICE.

Dropped quickly her fingers, forgetting their cunning.

SIXTH VOICE.

And stayed were the steps that had bounded in gladness.

FIRST VOICE.

But paled not the cheek of the maid as she listened.

SECOND VOICE.

Her people were saved—she was ready to perish.

THIRD VOICE.

Meek, bent the young head in its quiet submission.

FOURTH VOICE.

O! daughter of Jephthah, most worthy of honor.

FIFTH VOICE.

Nor daughter of Jephthah alone, but of Israel.

SIXTH VOICE.

A nation laments while its maids are bewailing.

ALL.

And the tribes of the earth, through all time, shall thee honor.

song.

Daughter, in thy narrow bed, Sister, from whom life hath fled, Jewish maiden, o'er thy head, Loving hands delight to fling Sweetest blossoms of the spring Nature's holy offering.

(They scatter flowers upon the mound from their baskets, and continue to do it, from time to time, through the song.)

Jewish maiden, virtues rare
Made thee e'en more good, than fair;
Pure as ever maidens are;
Meekly bent her drooping head,
Every thought of self had fled—
"Father, be't as thou hast said."

Other daughters have been good, But, among them, she hath stood Crown of virgin womanhood. Round this mound sad hearts await, Here to weep thine early fate, And thy goodness emulate.

Jewish maiden! fair and young, Ever shall thy praise be sung, All the maids of earth among. Purity beamed in thine eye—All the virtues that could die Wafted thy pure soul on high.

(Six voices chanting, each a separate sentiment.)

FIRST VOICE.

Whose heart was so strong as this beautiful maid's?

SECOND VOICE.

Whose filial devotion so perfect and pure?

THIRD VOICE.

No son of Judea was like unto her.

FOURTH VOICE.

Who'll teach us our duty now she lieth low?

FIFTH VOICE.

The maidens of Israel are poor in her loss.

SIXTH VOICE.

The God of our fathers make us, even us,

ALL.

Like unto the maiden we come to bewail.

song.

Woe! for the vow that the warrior made, The warrior and father, that Ammon be stayed,

And his country be freed from the grasp of the foe,

- Who the altars of God in the valleys laid low.
- Bereaved is a household—one heart is a wreck,
- Which thought for the bridal, its treasure to deck;
- Her life is aweary, uncheered, and alone,
- There beameth no future when hope is unknown.
- Sleep sweetly, pure maiden, disturbed by no fears,
- We'll keep the turf green by our sorrowing tears,
- And the blossoms we bring thee, renew when they fade,
- Lamenting, bewailing thee, beautiful maid.

song.

(With voices alternating.)

ONE VOICE.

He that sleeps, shall wake no more.

ALL.

Yes, upon the morrow.

ONE VOICE,

Years, the dead can not restore.

ALL.

But they ease our sorrow.

ONE VOICE.

All must die, though live they would-

ALL.

Every life's a debtor.

ONE VOICE.

Weeping, mourning, do no good,—

ALL.

Sadness maketh better.

ONE VOICE.

It is sad to mourn and weep.

ALL.

Sad, and yet a pleasure.

ONE VOICE.

Let each sorrowing memory sleep.

ALL.

Memory is a treasure.

Memories of the pure and good
Make our own hearts better.

This pure maiden, if we could,
We would not forget her.

song.

They met, and proud Ammon was conquered at last,

And the tramp of his warriors went hurrying past;

- His towns and his cities were swept from his hands,
- And the conquered oppressor hath sought other lands.
- There's a chieftain in Israel, once haughty and bold,
- But the light, in his dark eye, is altered and cold;
- There's a Judge, too, in Israel, loves justice and right,
- But the honors, they pay him, can bring no delight.
- He knoweth the price of proud Ammon's defeat,
- For a face is upturning, so pleadingly sweet;
- 'T is the picture that's ever his vision before,

And 't will fade from his sight, nevermore, nevermore.

There's a memory, haunting, will never depart,

And the sweet light of hope is shut out of his heart.

He is ruler, he's judge, but he's childless and lone,

For her life was the price of the victories won.

song.

(With alternate voices, one alone, and all answering.)

ONE VOICE.

Sing of all that's good and fair,

ALL.

She was better fairer:

ONE VOICE.

Sing of all that's bright and rare,

ALL.

She was brighter, rarer.

ONE VOICE.

Liken her to earth's flower-queen,

ALL.

Lily of the valley.

ONE VOICE.

Breathing fragrance, though unseen

ALL.

When the light winds dally

ONE VOICE.

Liken her to brighter flowers,

ALL.

Sharon's precious roses,

ONE VOICE.

Making glad the passing hours

ALL.

As each cup uncloses.

ONE VOICE.

Liken her to stars of night;

ALL.

They're too far above us;

ONE VOICE.

They are pure, and they are bright,

ALL.

But they can not love us.

ONE VOICE.

Liken her to all pure things;

Snow upon the mountain;
Dewdrops, snow, and flowers and springs;
Water from the fountain.

Yet is naught so pure and bright,
As this peerless daughter,
Turning meekly from the light
To the dark doom brought her.

CLOSING SONG.

(One Voice.)

Her life bought our freedom,
For the nation paid;
Israel can but honor
This devoted maid.

Prophet's hymning, tender,
Ready writer's praise,
Ever shall commend her,
Through all lapse of days.

And though Israel perish,
Prophet, priest, and king,
Yet the world shall cherish
Her of whom we sing.

Distant times and sages
Shall her fame rehearse,
Ages upon ages
Weave it into verse.

And no brighter luster Ever deed surround, Never mem'ry juster, Through all time be found.

All the world shall claim her, Like the sun and showers, Though we love to name her Israel's and ours.

Knd or Scene Kirth.







